

voice of reason, forged by the fires of war and tempered these last few years by yearnings for peace.

Because of my own military background, Yitzhak Rabin shared additional insights with me on the strength and force of Israeli defense forces and difficult combat environment they faced. I respected him enormously for the military prowess he demonstrated during his years of service and afterwards. His fighting skills in 1948 and 1967 earned him accolades as an authentic war hero. Most would agree that his military leadership was invaluable in securing the birth, and continuing security, of the Jewish State.

But Yitzhak Rabin left the battlefield for the political trenches in the 1970's, initially implementing iron fist policies during his first term as Prime Minister that brooked no dissent from the enemies of Israel. Hostile states, terrorist organizations committed to the destruction of the Jewish State, and other inimical forces would not push Israel into the sea.

After a stint as Defense Minister in the 1980's and then a Labor-Likud powersharing arrangement, Yitzhak Rabin returned to the Prime Minister's Office and began to lay the groundwork for comprehensive peace with the Palestinians and Arab Nations. It was not an easy decision to make, trading land for peace, but no one was more respected or qualified to lead Israel away from the bloodshed of its past to a more secure future.

The 1993 Declaration of Principles has started us down that road. I will not forget the Prime Minister's words that sunny September morning 2 years ago on the White House lawn when the accord was signed. "The time for peace has come," he said. "We, the soldiers who have returned from battles stained with blood * * * say in a loud and clear voice: Enough of blood and tears. Enough."

King Hussein appropriately eulogized Yitzhak Rabin as one who "died as a soldier of peace." We can only hope that his assassination imbues the peace process, pushing implementation of the Oslo II agreement forward. In earlier times Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin espoused different views and styles within the same Labor Party tent, but in an ironic twist the two forged a personal alliance these last few years in the name of peace. I have high hopes for the Acting Prime Minister carrying forward with Rabin's good work.

For if he were with us today, I think Yitzhak Rabin would urge us to finish the job he has begun. It only saddens me that this courageous leader did not live to enjoy the fruits of his own labor to create a better future for Israel.

THE DEATH OF YITZHAK RABIN

Mr. ROTH. Mr. President I, rise today to express my profound grief over the death of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin—a man who was brave in the conduct of war and courageous in the pursuit of peace.

Yitzhak Rabin's life embodied the very concept of leadership. He was a warrior of great skill, an accomplished diplomat, and, in the fullest sense of the term, a statesman. His leadership was a catalyst of reconciliation and peace in a region long torn by animosity and war. The dramatic progress we have witnessed over the last 2 years in the Middle East peace process would not have occurred without the leadership of Yitzhak Rabin.

One of his key strengths as a leader was his ability to bond realism with optimism. It is a trait that is all too rare and all too necessary in regions beset by conflict.

Rabin combined his acute understanding of the obstacles to peace in the Middle East with his recognition that peace was essential to security of his nation. The product is the historic roadmap in the Middle East we must now follow. It has not, nor will not, be an easy path. It will be all the more difficult in his absence.

In such endeavors, leaders matter. Rabin's tenure as Prime Minister demonstrated this clearly. Despite setbacks and ever present dangers, Rabin never allowed himself to become disillusioned with prospects for peace. He forged ahead. He marshalled support for what were initially unpopular, but nonetheless necessary, steps toward Arab-Israeli reconciliation. Rabin kept the process on track.

The death of Yitzhak Rabin is clearly a blow to the peace process. However, Mr. President, his assassination is not a reflection of the fragility of peace he has helped bring to the Middle East. It is a reflection of the urgency with which we must work to consolidate that peace.

We must remember that while leaders matter, it is their visions that are enduring. Yitzhak Rabin left to Israel and the Middle East, indeed to the world, a vision of reconciliation that will be his lasting legacy. Our greatest contribution to the memory of Yitzhak Rabin must not be our grief over his departure, but determination to ensure that his vision of peace and reconciliation becomes an enduring reality in the Middle East.

REMEMBERING YITZHAK RABIN: WARRIOR FOR PEACE

Mr. HOLLINGS. Mr. President, I rise today with a heavy heart to remember one of America's greatest friends—my friend Yitzhak Rabin—who was tragically murdered Saturday in Israel. His sudden death is even more shocking because he was assassinated just after making an impassioned speech for peace in the Mideast.

Mr. President, Yitzhak Rabin was the strongest leader in today's world. Period. As he guided the ship of Israel through a sea of hostility, he forcefully led the troubled Mideast toward peace. We can only hope that we continue to seek the Prime Minister's goal—peace among Moslem, Christian, and Jew—

and continue to turn away from the violence that always bubbles just under the surface in that part of the world.

Yitzhak Rabin trained to be a farmer. Like one of our greatest Presidents, Harry S. Truman, Prime Minister Rabin had the plain-speaking, straightforward, blunt common sense of farmers. But also like Truman, Rabin's destiny led him to the army and to becoming a world leader whose strategic intellect was respected all over.

Just 6 years ago, Senators DANIEL INOUE, Jake Garn, and I spent several hours with Rabin when he was Israel's Defense Minister. To this day, I will not forget the time that Mr. Rabin spent showing us the intricate desert defense preparations made by Israel. His courtesy, combined with his intense attention to detail, made our mission a learning success.

Mr. President, if there is one thing that I have realized in recent years, it is that Yitzhak Rabin was a warrior for peace in the Mideast. When Israel's security was in grave danger, he fought and led military battles, notably the Six-Day War in 1967. But over time, he came to embrace peace as the only way for Mideast stability.

Just 90 minutes before he was gunned down in Tel Aviv, Prime Minister Rabin stood before more than 100,000 people at a rally to implore them to harvest the fruits of peace. He said, "I waged war as long as there was no chance for peace. I believe there is now a chance for peace, a great chance, and we must take advantage of it for those standing here, and for those who are not here." A few moments later, he added, "The people truly want peace and oppose violence. Violence erodes the basis of Israeli democracy."

Mr. President, today, in our grief, as we remember our friend Yitzhak Rabin, let us all look to his last words for the guidance to achieve the greatest legacy we can give our friend—a lasting peace.

Mr. President, an editorial in today's edition of the State of Columbia is a fitting tribute to Prime Minister Rabin. I ask unanimous consent that it be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the editorial was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

RABIN: "BEST IN WAR, BUT * * * GREATEST IN PEACE"

Among the thousands who will experience the funeral of Yitzhak Rabin in front of an international audience today, the thoughts should be on the peace process the Israeli prime minister was setting up when an assassin struck him.

As Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said, Mr. Rabin was "at his best in war, but at his greatest in peace."

There was more truth than hyperbole in this. The man was a warrior who served as chief of staff of the Israel Defense Forces, overseeing the dramatic victory over Arab armies in the Six-Day War of 1967. He had risen to this position after more than 20 years as a soldier, a career that began in the Jewish underground before independence, as a commando in Haganah.